

Across the freeway from the giant Novato shopping center called Vintage Oaks runs a brackish haven for water fowl, lined with cat-tails and, on the weekends, cars of the many visitors. Rescued from developers who would have turned it into condos, this lovely marsh attracts birds, frogs, snakes, people and dogs. For commuters stuck in the nightmare traffic that lines the freeway to the east, Scottsdale Marsh is a reminder of to relax.

It is also, says Sangster, one of the most outstanding such projects in the United States.

How did one man accomplish so much? He works long hours, yes, but even more, he knows how to lead. Larry's sparkling personality brings people together and puts them at ease. They recognize he is genuine. Sangster explains that he is not only a good delegator, but he inspires confidence in others to make decisions—and they are good decisions. He expects the best and people rise to the occasion.

In addition to his dedication to the City of Novato, Larry is a devoted family man who assumed leadership responsibility for his own children's sports groups as they were growing up. And he's the kind of friend who is always there to help out.

"He always puts his friends above his personal plans," Sangster says, recounting how 10 years ago, Larry and his wife gave up travel plans for their anniversary in order to attend her husband's funeral. "Everybody is important to him."

Madam Speaker, every part of the City of Novato bears the stamp of Larry Dito's efforts to improve life for every member of the community—young, old, wealthy, working-class or needy, athlete or amateur. But even more, the residents of Novato carry the legacy of this man's example—that one person can be the catalyst for change to create a community.

And that, Madam Speaker, is why I honor Larry Dito on his retirement, after 35 years in service to a community forever in his debt.

#### MILITARY RESERVIST AND VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS REAUTHORIZATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. RON KLEIN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 5, 2007*

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the Improve & Expand Small Business Assistance Programs for Veterans Act of 2007. America's veterans have given their best for this country, for the freedoms that we cherish so much, and we must give them our best in return.

This legislation would expand the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans Business Development in order to facilitate better business outreach to our Nation's veterans. The legislation requires that the SBA open two additional Veterans' Outreach offices in the coming year and expand opportunities for women veterans. It would also allow veterans to obtain reduced fee SBA loans.

Approximately 5 percent of the 80 million small businesses in this country are owned by veterans. Veteran-owned small businesses have a higher success rate than other small

businesses, perhaps because of the strong work ethic and value system that the military imbues in its soldiers. I support this legislation because it will help veterans to enter and compete in today's business world, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation today.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DEAN AGUILLEN

**HON. HILDA L. SOLIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Dean Aguilén, an intelligent individual who has been on Speaker PELOSI's staff since 2002. Originally from San Antonio, Texas, he most recently served as a Senior Adviser and Director of Member Services in the Speaker's office. Dean's hard work, dedication, and skills are the reasons why he was so respected by his colleagues and Members.

I had the pleasure of knowing Dean over the last several years. Dean attended the weekly Congressional Hispanic Caucus, CHC, luncheons to give our caucus a House update and he proved to always be responsive to our needs. He was a valuable player in the Speaker's office and he represented her well before the CHC. He has made a lasting impression on the CHC and I commend Dean for his commitment to this country and to the Latino community.

While I am sad to see Dean leave, I am confident that the future will bring him much success. I wish Dean good health and the best of luck in all of his future endeavors. Buena suerte Dean.

#### RECOGNIZING NEWARK CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

**HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. TIBERI. Madam Speaker, Ohio is known for football. Many players from the State's two NFL teams, and our No. 1 ranked Ohio State Buckeyes have been playing football in Ohio since childhood. The rich football tradition was again highlighted in my district, as I am proud to recognize Newark Catholic High School as Division VI State champions.

Head Coach Bill Franks's team didn't have an easy road to get the championship title, it was a road paved with hard work and determination. This wasn't the first trip to the big game for Newark Catholic, as they have seven State titles under their belt. Even with a strong team, the competition was harder than ever this season. Newark Catholic had gigantic wins over both the second and sixth place teams, which earned them a ticket to the championship game against an unbeaten Bascom Hopewell-Loudon.

I feel honored to represent such a rich history of football at this high school. Newark Catholic won its first title back in 1978 and since then the Green Wave has claimed six championship titles. There is even a book telling the story of the exceptional football program at this high school titled, "Growing Up

Green: Newark Catholic Football and the 1985 State Championship."

After the 28–14 win on December 1, the school can proudly display their eighth title win. With a history like that, I'm sure the future is bright for this football program.

Congratulations to all of the coaches, players, families and community.

#### CONGRATULATING NELLE HARPER LEE ON THE OCCASION OF BEING AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 6, 2007*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is with both pride and pleasure that I rise today to honor one of the most beloved residents of Alabama, Miss Nelle Harper Lee, on the occasion of her receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

A native of Monroeville, Alabama, Miss Lee began her writing career at the University of Alabama where she wrote for student publications and served for one year as the editor of a campus humor magazine. She moved to New York City in 1950 where she worked as a reservations clerk with Eastern Air Lines and BOAC.

In 1956, Miss Lee found an agent, and soon after, she began the draft of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel was published on July 11, 1960, and became an immediate bestseller. She won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her novel, and in a 1999, poll run by the Library Journal, her novel was voted "Best Novel of the Century."

In 1966, Miss Lee was named to the National Council of Arts by President Johnson, and since that time, she has received many honorary doctorate degrees for her outstanding contributions to literature.

Madam Speaker, Miss Lee's masterpiece *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a model of literary achievement that has become an American classic. Its pages spoke a strong message of honor and tolerance during our Nation's struggle for equality. So, from one native south Alabamian to another, please accept my heartfelt expression of pride—on behalf of all of us who, over the years, have been touched in some way by "Mockingbird."

It is only appropriate that I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Miss Nelle Harper Lee on receiving this award. I know her sisters—Louise Lee Conner and Alice Lee—her family and her many friends join with me in praising her significant accomplishments.

Today, Madam Speaker, I rise to ask that President George W. Bush's remarks in honor of Miss Lee made at the ceremony for the 2007 Medal of Freedom recipients be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

PRESIDENT BUSH HONORS MEDAL OF FREEDOM RECIPIENTS, EAST ROOM—NOVEMBER 5, 2007

THE PRESIDENT. Good morning. Laura and I are thrilled to welcome you to the White House. We welcome the members of Congress, the members of the Cabinet, and other distinguished guests. It's an honor to be with the Medal of Freedom recipients, as well as their family members and friends. We're sure glad you're here.

The Medal of Freedom is the highest civil honor that a President can bestow. By an executive order of John F. Kennedy, the medal is designed to recognize great contributions to national security, the cause of peace and freedom, science, the arts, literature, and many other fields. The eight men and women came to this distinction by very different paths. Each of them, by effort and by character, has earned the respect of the American people, and holds a unique place in the story of our time.

The story of an old order, and the glimmers of humanity that would one day overtake it, was unforgettably told in a book by Miss Harper Lee. Soon after its publication a reviewer said this: "A hundred pounds of sermons on tolerance, or an equal measure of invective deploring the lack of it, will weigh far less in the scale of enlightenment than a mere 18 ounces of a new fiction bearing the title *To Kill a Mockingbird*."

Given her legendary stature as a novelist, you may be surprised to learn that Harper Lee, early in her career, was an airline reservation clerk. (Laughter.) Fortunately for all of us, she didn't stick to writing itineraries. (Laughter.) Her beautiful book, with its grateful prose and memorable characters, became one of the biggest-selling novels of the 20th century.

Forty-six years after winning the Pulitzer Prize, *To Kill a Mockingbird* still touches and inspires every reader. We're moved by the story of a man falsely accused—with old prejudice massed against him, and an old sense of honor that rises to his defense. We learn that courage can be a solitary business. As the lawyer Atticus Finch tells his daughter, "before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience."

Years after *To Kill a Mockingbird* was put to film, the character of Atticus Finch was voted the greatest movie hero of all time. It won Gregory Peck the Oscar. He was said to believe the role "brought him closest to being the kind of man he aspired to be." The great actor counted Harper Lee among his good friends, and we're so pleased that Gregory Peck's wife, Veronique, is with us today. Thank you for coming.

One reason *To Kill a Mockingbird* succeeded is the wise and kind heart of the author, which comes through on every page. This daughter of Monroeville, Alabama had something to say about honor, and tolerance, and, most of all, love—and it still resonates. Last year Harper Lee received an honorary doctorate at Notre Dame. As the degree was presented, the graduating class rose as one, held up copies of her book, and cheered for the author they love.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* has influenced the character of our country for the better. It's been a gift to the entire world. As a model of good writing and humane sensibility, this book will be read and studied forever. And so all of us are filled with admiration for a great American and a lovely lady named Harper Lee.

Now I call on the military aide to read the citations for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

MILITARY AIDE. Harper Lee. Harper Lee's beautiful book is a meditation on family, human complexity, and some of the great themes of American life. At a critical moment in our history, *To Kill a Mockingbird* helped focus the nation on the turbulent struggle for equality. The novel became an instant American classic and earned her a Pulitzer Prize. Nearly half a century after its publication, her work continues to captivate new readers who encounter its compelling power for the first time. The United States honors Harper Lee for her out-

standing contribution to the great literary tradition of America.

THE PRESIDENT. Thank you all for coming. Laura and I now invite you to a reception here in the State Dining Room. I hope you've enjoyed this ceremony as much as I have. May God bless you all. Thank you.

#### A PROCLAMATION HONORING RAYMOND "SKEET" BOTDORF FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE MILITARY AND UNITED STATES VETERANS

#### HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Raymond "Skeet" Botdorf was a member of the Army Band Corps; and

Whereas, he earned a Bronze Star for capturing a Nazi Prison Officer who tried to escape from a prison camp in Czechoslovakia; and

Whereas, Raymond "Skeet" Botdorf is a member of the VFW Post 63 in Dover, Ohio; and

Whereas, he plays TAPS for an average of 100 funerals a year; and

Whereas, Raymond "Skeet" Botdorf has honored 3,000 veterans by playing TAPS at their funerals; and

Whereas, Raymond "Skeet" Botdorf is saluted for his service and dedication; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with his friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend and thank Raymond "Skeet" Botdorf for his contributions to his community and country.

#### TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM RHODES

#### HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor William Rhodes of Gandeeville, WV, for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

William has been involved as a member of the Boy Scouts for the past 6 years as a member of Troop 434 sponsored by Walton Union Church in Walton, WV. For his Eagle Scout project, William improved the facilities at Bessie Jones Memorial Park. He constructed a handicap accessible bridge, trash can receptacles, three benches, and most notably built a trail at the park complete with signage, so walkers could easily navigate their way.

His accomplishments and hard work demonstrate the high standards held by those who achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. He has been involved with his local 4-H Club and played freshman and junior varsity football for the Roane County Raiders. William is currently a junior at Roane County High School and attends Roane-Jackson Vocational School, where he is studying auto mechanics.

I extend my congratulations to William and look forward to his future accomplishments. Roane County is fortunate to have such a dedicated, patriotic, young man among its citizens.

#### RECOGNIZING 200 YEARS OF RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND STEWARDSHIP BY NOAA AND ITS PREDECESSOR AGENCIES

SPEECH OF

#### HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA has been the leader in national research on oceans and the atmosphere, and their effect on the human environment.

NOAA evolved from the Survey of the Coast, established in 1807, to an organization that provides daily forecasts, storm warnings, and climate monitoring to a variety of organizations that support marine commerce. NOAA has a presence in each of the 50 States and countries worldwide. NOAA takes part in the most advanced, cutting-edge research, using new and innovative technologies to ensure this country's economic future.

I am very proud that Western North Carolina is home to the National Climate Data Center, the largest archive of weather and global climate related data, including that data collected by NOAA. The center holds data as old as 150 years old, and as recent as a few hours ago.

NOAA, and NCDC, are integral to our Nation's success as a global economy. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contributions of NOAA.

#### IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF VERICE M. MASON

#### HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise in celebration of the life of my dear friend Verice M. Mason who passed away December 2, 2007 at the age of 55. A native of Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, Verice resided in Washington, DC prior to moving to Metuchen, New Jersey 30 years ago. A 1970 graduate of Theodore Roosevelt High School in Washington, DC, Verice would go on to obtain her undergraduate degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio and later her law degree from Rutgers School of Law in Newark.

Verice had a long and distinguished professional career. She served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel for MDA Advantage Insurance Company, responsible for all legal and regulatory matters for the company. Prior to joining MDA Advantage, Verice was appointed chief of the Authorities unit in the Governor's Counsel Office in 2004 by Governor Richard J. Cody, where she represented the Governor's interests and served as his liaison to over 40 authorities, boards and commissions.

Other positions held by Verice include Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the MIIX Group, Inc., partner in New Jersey's office of Peterson, and assistant commissioner